

Statement of
RCA Reston 2020 Committee
Reston Task Force Meeting
April 26, 2011

Good evening, I'm John Hanley, co-chair of the RCA Reston 2020 Committee. I want to thank you for the excellent work you and especially the Steering Committee aided by DPZ staff have been doing in addressing the difficult issue of the jobs:housing balance in Reston's TOD areas.

For nearly a year, Reston 2020 has maintained that the population in these TOD areas ought to be equally divided between residents and workers, a roughly 2:1 jobs-housing balance using the assumptions the Task Force has been using about GSF per worker (300 GSF) and dwelling unit (1,500 GSF). Our argument has been that, in balancing these populations, we help assure that the movement of people into and out of the TOD areas is roughly equal—especially during commute hours—limiting both congestion and environmental impacts. Under current Task Force assumptions, including the assumption that there are 1.6 workers per dwelling unit, the theoretical ideal jobs-housing ratio would be even lower than 2:1, but we appreciate that there are other development goals for the TOD areas.

In recent weeks, we have shared with you a series of reports and analyses that show much more comprehensively than we ever could the essential correctness of this position. These include:

- The results of WMATA's 2005 Metrorail ridership study, a survey of tens of thousands of Metrorail riders, that shows residents of TOD areas have a much higher propensity to use transit

and not use automobiles than incoming workers. This occurs both within and beyond the ¼-mile inner perimeter of these areas.

- The judgment of the American Planning Association paper by Jerry Weitz that the number of people living and working in TOD communities ought to be roughly equal.
- The statistical analysis of the Center for Transit-Oriented Development (CTOD) of all 3,700-plus TOD areas in the country that shows that residentially-dominated TOD areas have lower vehicle miles travelled (VMT) and higher use of public transit than employee-dominated TOD areas.
- The analysis of the Task Force's own Fred Costello that shows that a balanced jobs-housing ratio will minimize the need for transportation infrastructure development yet, at higher densities, can afford a competitive economic return. Moreover, he recommends that incremental development in the TOD areas not exceed a 1.6:1 ratio until that balance is achieved.

All of these studies are available on the Reston 2020 blog for your information and consideration.

We appreciate that Reston has dug a deep commercial development hole in the former RCIG that it must climb out of if it is to achieve this balance some forty or fifty years from now. Yet, if Reston is to continue to be a model of community planning, it needs to begin the difficult climb out of that hole toward an unambiguous goal and a disciplined process. We believe that the goal of a 2:1 jobs: housing ratio we have articulated is well-justified by experts and the experience of others. We strongly urge you to adopt it as the goal for Reston's TOD areas and develop processes—including Arlington-like mandates for prior or simultaneous construction of residential elements of development projects—to help assure Reston's continuing world-class status as a planned community.